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ABSTRACT

This document is a description of the Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association (NSSRA) whose function is to provide recreation for the handicapped, primarily school-aged children. Recreation is defined as not just diversion but the restoration of strength and spirits after toil. It is stated that the NSSRA's programs are grouped to emphasize culture, environment, and sports. This document provides a description of the activities in each grouping. For culture, the following activities are listed: dance, music, arts and crafts, and creative drama. For environment, chess club, photography, science club, cooking clubs, and home economic club are listed. The following activities are listed for sports: bowling, tennis, horseback riding, roller skating, swimming, and yoga. Combinations of these various activities are also described: summer camp, teen club, and girls' friendship club. (JA)

ED 092541

Deerfield Glencoe Glenview Highland Park

Highwood Kenilworth Northbrook Northfield Wilmette Winnetka

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NSSRA

Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association

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introduction

We are the NSSRA and we are unique. NSSRA stands for Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association and the uniqueness comes from being the first, and until recently, the only organization of its kind. Our function is to provide recreation for special people — those with handicaps. Primarily we deal with school age children although our involvement concerns those from childhood through adulthood.

In March of 1969, Illinois Senate Bills 745 and 746 were passed, permitting the association of park districts and/or municipalities of less than 500,000 popuiation to provide recreational programs for the handicapped.

Within a year, the towns of Deerfield, Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Highwood, Kenilworth, Northbrook, Wilmette and Winnetka joined together and these nine communities formed the NSSRA. This year, 1973, Northfield joined us. By agreement the Association is renewed every three years.

The Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from each member district. Each district provides facilities, local publicity in their brochures, financial aid and many suggestions for various activities.

The NSSRA does not see itself as an "extra" program but rather as a completion of the commitment of each district to provide comprehensive recreation for its entire population.

We are housed in the Northern Suburban Special Education District headquarters, 760 Red Oak Lane in Highland Park, Illinois. We work hand in hand with the NSSED — to provide a means for improving the life of the total child.

However, recreation is more than diversion . . . properly defined it is the restoration and refreshment of *strength* and *spirits* after toil. For some this is a power packed game of baseball. For others it is the feel of moist clay lovingly shaped.

The NSSRA recreation programs are designed to create, stimulate and utilize interest in the world *around* us and the world *within* us. With the possible exception of purely physical activities, there are no hard and fast category groupings. Our programs overlap and interweave to inspire the total child.

The key factor in all our programs is stressing the social development of each child in every situation. To help him to grow socially, to learn to appreciate his own value to the world, to make meaningful interaction with others a part of everyday life.

Loosely, our programs can be grouped with emphasis on "culture," "environment" and "sports." We realize that some will consider chess a sport and others will consider baking a cake an art. But the name is really unimportant; it is the enjoyment of learning and playing that matters.

In addition, the NSSRA does offer several activities which significantly combine "culture," "environment," "sports" and, most certainly, social development at all times: the Summer Camp, Teen Club, Girls' Friendship Club, and the Child Development program.

If a need is shown, we will attempt to fill it in our program planning, or make referrals to the appropriate community resources such as scouting organizations and residential camps.

The NSSRA staff is composed of selected professional personnel, part time program leaders, and a large number of adult and teenage volunteers. The combined efforts of this group provide personal attention and instruction for each individual.

The staff never forgets that first and foremost these are children — children who need to learn and develop, children who need to see and smell and hear and touch, children who need to bask in the warmth of personal attention.

culture

Art in all its forms is necessary to the soul. To express oneself freely whether it be in dance or music or drama is to live fully. We offer a variety of programs in music, dance, theater, arts and crafts to our students — each with the purpose of providing a path to self-expression.

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DANCE. Since the dawn of time, man has expressed himself in dance. Emotions are conveyed by body movement. We seek to have our students appreciate the aesthetics of the dance as well as learning to control and develop their muscles.

Let yourself go is the byword in the dance classes. Feel like a leopard or an Indian or a ballerina or a willow tree? Then, be one! Our classes offer an effective means of expression in modern jazz dancing, acrobatics, ballet and mime. Each child learns to express himself regardless of the beat of the music.

MUSIC. Music can release the innermost feelings, provide a sense of relief and give inner peace. Music can also provide a means of fellowship and mutual enjoyment.

Today the guitar is the basic instrument for young people. There is a strong sense of togetherness in a group whether they are singing old favorites or the latest top hit. We want to give our students an opportunity to share in this experience. Basic chording is taught so that each may learn elementary skills.

Piano and voice lessons are designed to give instruction in reading music, using correct fingering and keeping time. Music theory is also included as is chordal structure, embellishments, conducting and the use of other instruments for a fuller music experience. Students may sing and play in a solo, a duet or accompanying an enthusiastic group sing-a-long.

ARTS AND CRAFTS. The self-expression available through working with one's hands can produce the highest feelings of accomplishment. A vast range of materials is used in the classes providing each child with a variety of artistic tools for self-expression and true creativity.

To behold a thing of beauty, self-made, whether it be jewelry made from handmade beads, a painted rock, a seed picture, a plastic flower, or a paper maché animal, lets each child say, "It's mine. I made it myself."

CREATIVE DRAMA. "All the world's a stage." This class lets each child participate and become aware of means of self-expression through characterization, whether it be through puppets, rhythmical movement, or the production of skits.

There is special excitement in applying the make-up, gathering the props, learning the lines — and relishing the applause of a delighted audience.

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The world around us offers possibilities for exploration in myriad ways. Through constant new experiences and by touching the innermost depths of imagination, each child asserts himself anew. We seek to stimulate the interests of each child in areas of his life familiar to him and to create new and exciting possibilities for his future. Each is encouraged to reach his full potential.

PHOTOGRAPHY. Photography is a coming art form and an everyday pleasure. The fundamentals of good picture taking emphasizing basic ingredients of balance, composition and exposure are integral parts of this program. As students advance they learn experimental techniques designed to have their pictures say *more* than a thousand words.

environment

CHESS CLUB. The eyes of the world turned on the game of chess in 1972. Realizing this developing interest in the game, the NSSRA initiated a program which will teach the rules of chess in addition to the development of strategy and concentration necessary. In playing the game, each child develops a pride in his own accomplishments and an appreciation for the skill of his opponent.

WOODWORKING. The softness of pine; the hardness of oak; each craftsman knows his materials and appreciates their beauty and function. Opportunities are offered in learning the fundamentals of working with wood and the appropriate tools used. Each child combines these skills in completing his own project. An awareness of safety is stressed; an appreciation of craftsmanship is gained.

SCIENCE CLUB. The secrets of the universe have been a mystery to man since time began. Unraveling them contains a special fascination — whether it be charting the stars or peering through a microscope. This club seeks to stimulate the interests of all its members, from astronomy to biology to chemistry. Its members are held together by the common question "why?"

COOKING CLUBS. Anybody want to make some popcorn? How many teaspoons in a tablespoon? Are the cupcakes ready? Whose turn to do the dishes? Laughter and concentration, tantalizing aromas and anticipation — these are the ingredients of our cooking clubs for boys and girls. All learn the basics of meal planning, preparation, serving and clean-up. Cooking is not done for the student, but with the student, whether it be a simple snack or a casserole. All learn, all enjoy, all hear the accolade, "That tastes *good!*"

HOME ECONOMICS CLUB (Social Skills for Girls). Once upon a time a lady was taught to "sew a fine seam," play the harp and speak French. Times have changed but there is still an essence in being a lady and that essence is the basis of this course.

Personal development through meaningful interaction and basic social skills in addition to party preparations, general table manners, sewing and needle point, health and dental care, personal hygiene and good grooming is the basic curriculum. The material is so presented to inspire each girl to want to learn and retain lady-like behavior.

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sports

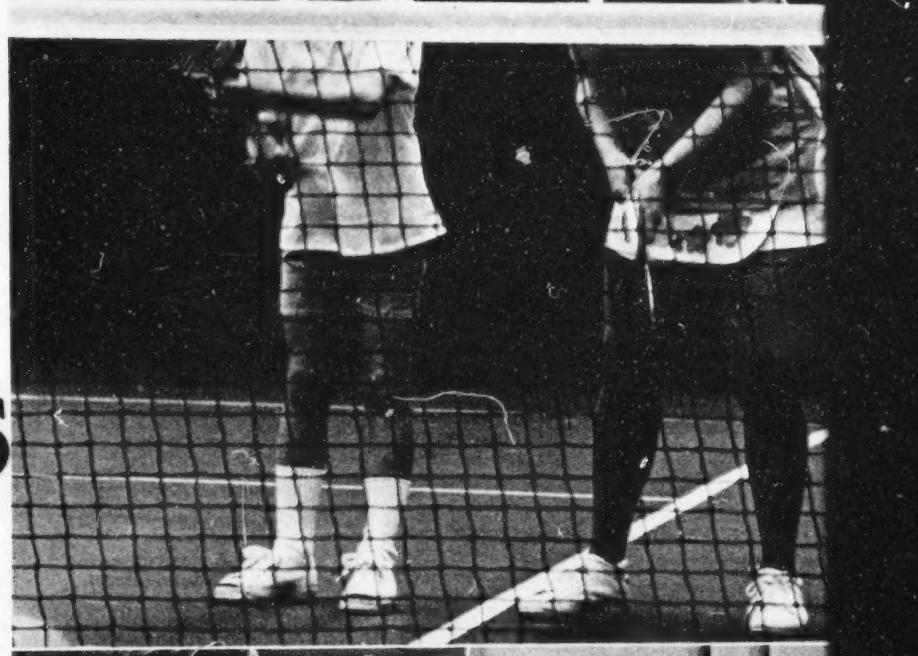
To stretch, to bend, to move, to compete, to enjoy — this is the essence of sports. To learn to follow the rules, to learn to work as a team, to learn to appreciate one's own self, to learn to appreciate the capabilities of the competitor — this is the essence of sports.

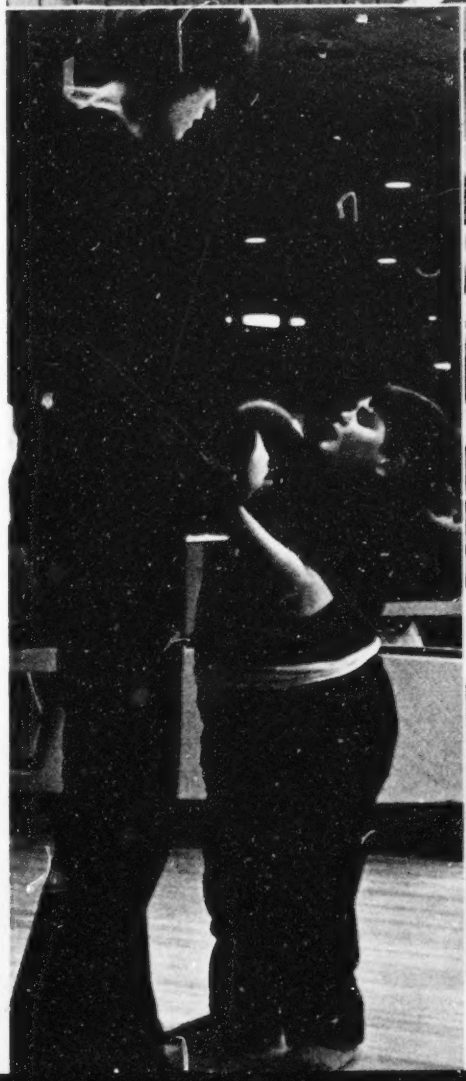
For some of our children, learning gross motor skills such as sitting, walking and raising their arms is their "sport." And, through success, they learn self appreciation. Our *Motor Development* program is designed to help just such children. We fill their need for muscular activity through recreation and formal exercise.

For many children, we offer a variety of *After School Sports* and *General Sporting Activities*. Here each child learns fundamentals and rules of various games and sports in addition to overall good sportsmanship. They learn that teamwork is as essential on the playing field as it is in everyday life. Exercise develops fitness — both physical and mental. Each child's outlook on life is broadened as he gains new skills.

Those children with special skills and interest are encouraged to participate in *Olympic Training*. The program concentrates on the major sport areas and gross motor control in addition to the individual track and field events. Our chief concern is for the individual child and developing his entire possibilities. Hopefully, many of the children enrolled in this program will compete in the Special Olympics sponsored by the Kennedy Foundation.

Additionally, we offer many specialized sports for our children. As in all our programs, each child is encouraged to do the very best he can, to have fun and to learn. Some of the programs offered at this time are listed on the following page.





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sports

ROLLER SKATING. Come, take my hand. Round and round go the wheels. Little tingles tickle the feet. Roller skating requires delicate balance and co-ordination as well as determination. Everyone moves; everyone falls; everyone enjoys.

SWIMMING. To feel the cool water on your back, to watch the little ripplets your hands make, to enjoy a big splash, or to quietly pretend you're a fish — this is the introduction to swimming. Instructional staff members help every child to feel free in the water, exercising each muscle, developing new strengths. For beginners, the emphasis is on learning basic skills that are essential for safety. For the more advanced swimmers, there is concentration on learning new strokes, improving coordination, and moving through the water with ease and grace. An appreciation and a respect for the water is never outgrown.

TENNIS. The beauty of tennis comes in self-improvement and the appreciation of the opponent's capabilities. Tennis is not played alone; each player improves by observing his opponent and putting all of his abilities to use. There are a variety of skills to be mastered as the game is learned. Muscles are stretched, hand-eye coordination is developed, strategy is learned, self-worth is reaffirmed.

BOWLING. Hold your breath and wait — how many pins will go down? Two? Five? Or, miracle of miracles, ten? Bowling has been a popular sport in this country since it was immortalized by Rip Van Winkle. Nine pins have become ten, but the fun remains the same. In bowling, the elements of competition and good sportsmanship are utilized in such activities as a culminating tournament.

HORSEBACK RIDING. There is a feeling of challenge and excitement in mounting a horse. Riding skills are gradually mastered through expert instruction, and a feeling of love and respect develops between the rider and his mount. Whether enjoying a leisurely walk, a brisk trot or an exhilarating canter, each rider comes to know his horse and himself.

YOGA. Yoga is gaining in popularity in this country. For many it has become a pathway to self understanding and inner peace. Our program stresses developing concentration and attention span in addition to physical agility. As every man needs to learn how to control the inner self and how to relax totally, so must every child.

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combination

SUMMER CAMP. It is summer and the air is filled with the sounds of children laughing. They come to our summer day camp — 100 in 1971, 257 in 1972 — with an age range of 3 to 21.

The daily summer program includes nature study, art, crafts, drama and music, motor development, games and sports, and academic study. In addition there are selected field trips and instructional and recreational swimming.

The NSSRA works closely with the NSSED in prescribing a tailor-made program for each child. Constant innovations are made with highly-trained, imaginative staff members having each child's well being as their primary goal.

Again, social interaction is the key. Getting along with one another, with the leader — learning about themselves and others. Exploring their potential, developing their skills, expanding their horizons.

The staff gives to these children and they are repaid ten times over. In the delighted look of sudden understanding, in the concentration of making an unused muscle work, in pride and self-awareness, in the unbounded joy of being out-of-doors, in the miracle of blossoming friendships, in the quiet holding of a small hand.

TEEN CLUB. "Give us an idea of what you think would be fun and let's see what we can do with it — this is your Club." This is the philosophy behind the Teen Club.

Weekly activities such as bowling, dining out, theater trips, singing, experimental arts and crafts, and square dancing are enjoyed by the group. The teens provide the energy; the staff provides the guidance and we all get to know one another better.

GIRLS' FRIENDSHIP CLUB. The girls gather in one another's homes. Teenage girls. Laughing. Whispering. Laughing again. Letting down their hair (or putting it up in different styles!). Shopping, going to the movies, doing their nails, or just playing records — they gather to share exciting experiences. To develop meaningful relationships. To set a pattern for the future.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT. The teacher sits on the floor in the middle of the room. The children sit beside her. A warm smile is on her face. The children smile back. "Let's be airplanes," she says. They all grasp their feet. "Wheels up!" Slowly, the children bring their legs toward their bodies. "Fly!" They rock from side to side, maneuvering their "planes." "What do you see?" "A house." "The ocean." "A boat." "The moon."

These could be any children. They are special children. Children enrolled in the Child Development recreation program. Between the ages of three and seven, referred by their teachers, in limited groups, they come to learn, to exercise, to develop.

The ultimate goal of the Child Development recreation program is to enhance the potential of each child's perceptual-motor development. How to share, how to ask questions, how to give answers, how to pay attention, how to follow directions, how to help one another. These are all skills essential in developing awareness of self and awareness of others.

By widening their range of experiences in movement and language skills the children are given the security of knowing, "Yes, I *can*." In addition to motor development and social interaction, there are arts and crafts, music and rhythm. There are also walks in the sunshine, flying kites, making snowballs, collecting leaves and smelling flowers. There is also love.